

Message Text

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13

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NIC-01 SAJ-01 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5037

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT UR

SUBJ: IMPLICATION OF PUBLICATION OF GULAG ARCHIPELAGO

1. MAJOR DISCORDANT NOTE ON THE IDEOLOGICAL SCENE AS THE SOVIETS USHERED IN THE NEW YEAR WAS THE PUBLICATION IN PARIS OF ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN'S LATEST HISTORICAL WORK, GULAG ARCHIPELAGO. CONSISTENT WITH THEIR REPORTED INTENTION TO DEAL MORE AGGRESSIVELY WITH "IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE" (MOSCOW 15623), SOVIETS QUICKLY WENT ON OFFENSIVE IN FORM OF TWO TASS COMMENTARIS FOR FOREIGN AUDIENCES RELEASED JANUARY 3. SOLZHENITSYN IS DESCRIBED AS A PUPPET AND RENEGADE WITH ANTI-SOVIET ATTITUDES WHO HAS GONE FURTHER THAN BEFORE IN SLANDERING THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS SOCIAL SYSTEM.

2. FIRST DOMESTIC COVERAGE OF BOOK PROVIDED BY TV COMMENTATOR ANATOLY POTAPOV EVENING JANUARY 4 IN REVIEW WHICH LATER REPEATED ON NATIONWIDE RADIO. CHARACTERIZING BOOK AS "LAMPOON," POTAPOV GENERALLY CONCENTRATED ON USE WHICH ANTI-SOVIET FORCES IN WEST ARE MAKING OF ITS PUBLICATION. CENTRAL PRESS HAS NOT YET COMMENTED ON THE PUBLICATION OF GULAG ARCHIPELAGO, SUGGESTING THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT FULLY COORDINATED CAMPAIGN AGAINST

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PUBLICATION OF BOOK AND MANNER IN WHICH IT WILL BE EX-

PLAINED TO GENERAL PUBLIC. IN VIEW EXTENSIVE AND SENSATIONAL COVERAGE BEING GIVEN TO BOOK BY FOREIGN MEDIA, INCLUDING RADIO BROADCASTS TO USSR, SOVIETS MAY FEEL OBLIGED TO REACT SOONER THAN LATER IN THE PRESS FOR DUAL PURPOSES OF MAINTAINING CREDIBILITY AND PRESENTING THEIR OWN VIEWPOINT. POSSIBLE FIRST STEP WOULD BE TO CARRY ARTICLES HOSTILE TO BOOK AND AUTHOR WHICH HAVE APPEARED IN FOREIGN COMMUNIST PRESS.

3. LATEST ACTION BY SOLZHENITSYN ONCE AGAIN PRESENTS TO SOVIET AUTHORITIES A THORNY DOMESTIC ISSUE WITH SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL COMPLICATIONS. ON ONE HAND, A SOVIET CITIZEN CONTINUES ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES WHICH, AS DESCRIBED IN TASS COMMENTARIS, ARE PUNISHABLE UNDER SOVIET CRIMINAL CODES. FURTHERMORE, THIS IS FIRST BLATANT CASE OF VIOLATION OF SOVIET COPYRIGHT REGULATIONS WHICH REQUIRE THAT ALL WORKS BY SOVIET AUTHORS BEING SENT ABROAD FOR PUBLICATION BE CHanneled THROUGH CENTRAL COPYRIGHT OFFICE.

4. SOLZHENITSYN WORK RAISES IN ACUTE FASHION THE QUESTION OF THE STATUS OF DESTALINIZATION. WHILE EMBASSY IS NOT ABLE TO ASSESS THE UPS AND DOWNS IN THIS FIELD, WE NOTE THAT FAVORABLE ATTENTION CONTINUES TO BE GIVEN TO REHABILITEES, SUCH AS TUKHACHEVSKY ON HIS BIRTHDAY AND RUDZUTAK IN PODGORNYY RIGA SPEECH. BUT NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT THEIR EXECUTION OR OTHER CRIMES OF THE STALIN ERA.

5. BECAUSE OF INTERTWINING, IMPORTANT ISSUES INVOLVED, WE ASSUME THIS CASE WILL BE PONDERED AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS HERE. IN SPECULATING ON POSSIBLE ACTION AGAINST SOLZHENITSYN, WE MUST TAKE ACCOUNT OF FACT THAT LATEST WORK HITS DIRECTLY AT INTERESTS OF IDEOLOGICALLY CONSERVATIVE SECURITY APPARATUS. WHILE OVERALL SOVIET INTERESTS WOULD PROBABLY BEST BE SERVED BY IGNORING PUBLICATION OF LATEST SOLZHENITSYN WORK, SOME ELEMENTS IN REGIME UNDOUBTEDLY ARE ARGUING FOR VIGOROUS COUNTERATTACK. THOSE OFFICIALS CONCERNED, FOR PRACTICAL REASONS, WITH SOVIET IMAGE ABROAD MAY BE URGING MODERATION, BUT THERE IS SURELY LITTLE SYMPATHY OR PATIENCE FOR SOLZHENITSYN AND SAKHAROV ANYWHERE IN THIS REGIME. INTERNATIONAL CONSTRAINTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONTINUE TO OPERATE, HOWEVER, AND WE ARE INCLINED TO THINK THAT SOVIET REACTION AT PRESENT WILL BE LIMITED TO PUBLIC ATTACKS AND FURTHER PERSONEL HARASSMENT. THIS DOES NOT PRECLUDE POSSIBILITY OF PUNITIVE ACTION AT LATER DATE, EITHER BECAUSE REGIME FEELS IT CAN NO LONGER IGNORE DISSIDENT CHALLENGES OR BECAUSE THE INTERNATIONAL CONSTRAINTS DECLINE IN IMPORTANCE.

6. STATE 001748 RECEIVED AFTER THIS MESSAGE PREPARED.
NOW THAT TELEVISION AND RADIO HAVE BROKEN THE ICE,
PRESS CAN BE EXPECTED TO TAKE UP CUDGELS. ASSUME TASS
COMMENTARIES FOR FOREIGN AUDIENCES UP TO NOW WERE
IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO DEPARTMENT VIA FBIS.SOMMERLATTE

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